NATURAL NEWS

The Field Museum
Exploring
The Earth And Its
People

September 8, 1995

CENTER FOR EVOLUTIONARY AND ENVIRONMENTAL BIOLOGY

NOON BALLOON SERIES BEGINS

The autumn 1995 series of the Noon Balloon opened Tuesday, September 5, with presentations by **Robert Welsch,** Adjunct Associate Curator, Department of Anthropology, and **Pamela Stewart,** Research Associate, Department of Anthropology. They described an interdisciplinary project directed toward advancing our understanding of human diversity on the Sepik coast of New Guinea. Welsch and Stewart are working with **John Terrell,** Department of Anthropology, to explore how social processes such as population migration, intermarriage, social interaction among communities, and the fission and fusion of village populations, have shaped the genetic structure of the peoples living on the Sepik coast. Rob Welsch reviewed the ethnographic and archaeological research of the New Guinea Research program conducted since 1987. He described how the Sepik coast of New Guinea is one of the most linguistically diverse places on earth. Terrell and Welsch's research has shown the Sepik coast is not an enclave of small, isolated communities, but rather the people throughout the region participate in an involved network of relationships, many of which are intergenerationally inherited friendships. Pamela Stewart described the newest component of the New Guinea Research Program, the Human Diversity Project which Terrell, Welsch and Stewart are seeking funds to support. Their proposal is designed to investigate both the extent to which the peoples of the Sepik region are biologically partitioned by geographic, cultural, or linguistic barriers to gene flow and how extensively the present-day population structure of this region has been shaped by anthroplogically-known patterns of intermarriage, family relocation, and individual or community alliances. From each participant in the study anthropological documentation such as genealogical history, friendship associations, and marriage practices would be gathered in addition to genetic data to be obtained from blood samples. This research would analyze variability inmitochondrial DNA, Y chromosome DNA and autosomal DNA in relationship to geographic information, genealogical data, friendship interrelationship data and linguistic affiliation. When funding is obtained, they hope to take the study of human genetic diversity in a truly new direction. -- Submitted by **Pamela Stewart**

MYCOLOGISTS ATTEND MUSHROOM MEETING

A group of Field Museum staff, students and interns attended the North American Mycological Association (NAMA) annual meeting in Bemidji, Minnesota, August 24–27. NAMA is an association of professional and non-professional mushroom enthusiasts whose annual meetings include extensive mushroom-collecting forays. Participants at this year's meeting included **Greg Mueller**, **Jack Murphy**, and **Betty Strack** (all in Botany), graduate student **John Paul Schmit,** undergraduate interns **Gina Wesley**, **Debra Arguete** and **Aleksa Kozinski**, and Biodiversity Explorers high school interns **Monique Tran**, **Elizabeth Salgado** and **Alexander Janus**. Greg Mueller presented a talk on fungal biodiversity and species conservation.

This was a special trip for the Biodiversity Explorers, coming at the end of their summer program. At the meeting they had the opportunity to meet and interact with scientists and hobbyists, and learn even more about mushrooms through a program of workshops, lectures, round-table discussions and collecting forays. They participated in four collecting field trips and were able to collect many new species of fungi. Nevertheless, the Biodiversity Explorers were able to "wow" the NAMA attendees with their ability to identify fungi after only eight weeks of training. Monique Tran impressed the president of the Connecticut Mycological Association with her consistently correct identifications -- including one correction of the president's!

FIELD MUSEUM ORNITHOLOGISTS ATTEND BIRD MEETINGS

Two major ornithological meetings occurred nearly back to back in August. The Fifth Neotropical Ornithological Congress was held in Asunción, Paraguay, August 5–11, followed by the American Ornithologists' Union's annual meeting in Cincinnati, August 16–19 . **Doug Stotz** and **Tom Schulenberg** (both Environmental and Conservation Programs, "ECP"), along with **John Bates**, one of the incoming curators in the Bird Division, attended the meeting in Paraguay. John chaired a symposium on the evolution of Neotropical birds and presented a talk in that symposium entitled "Advances in molecular systematics: their relation to the biology of species". Stotz and Schulenberg each presented a talk in a symposium on bird conservation--Schulenberg talked on "RAP: Rapid assessment of conservation priorities", and Stotz about "Bird diversity and species turnover along elevational gradients in eastern Peru and eastern Brazil: a comparison." In addition, Stotz, along with three Brazilian colleagues, presented a poster entitled "Richness and distribution of birds in an elevational gradient in southeastern Brazil." At the meeting, attended by 300 scientists, these Field Museum scientists renewed and extended their contacts with Latin American scientists, and with North American ornithologists working throughout the Neotropics.

The AOU meeting, with some 600 participants, had a big Field Museum presence, including **Dave Willard** (Zoology, Birds) and the two incoming curators in the Bird Division, **Shannon Hackett** and John Bates, Stotz and Schulenberg of ECP, **Peter Lowther** of Computer Services, as well as four University of Chicago graduate students who work with the Field Museum--**Keith Barker**, **Amy Driskell**, **John Harshman**, and **Shai Mitra**. Peter Lowther was coordinator of the Scientific Program for the meeting, while Shannon Hackett was a member of

THE FIELD MUSEUM
1996 STAFF HOLIDAY SCHEDULE

Below is a listing of staff holidays for 1996. The list also specifies which days the Museum will be closed to the public. Your actual day off will be determined by where you work (public or non-public area). Remember, there are 10 holiday days per year.

DAYS THE MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED TO THE PUBLIC:

Monday	January 1	New Year's Day
Thursday	November 28	Thanksgiving Day
Wednesday	December 25	Christmas Day

DAYS NON-PUBLIC AREAS OF MUSEUM WILL BE CLOSED:

Monday	January 1	New Year's Day
Monday	January 15	Martin Luther King Day
Monday	February 19	President's Day
Friday	April 5	Friday Before Easter
Monday	May 27	Memorial Day
Thursday	July 4	Independence Day
Monday	September 2	Labor Day
Thursday	November 28	Thanksgiving Day
Wednesday	December 25	Christmas Day

FLOATING HOLIDAY

To recognize that different holidays are important to different people, one of your 10 paid holidays is a floating holiday which is a day of your choice. The use of your floating holiday requires advance approval by your supervisor/department manager. Your floating holiday must be used within the calendar year. There will be no carryover of unused holiday time. When you leave the Museum, there is no compensation for unused holiday time.

TIME SHEETS: When you use your floating holiday, code your time in the "Floating Holiday" section of the time sheet. This will enable payroll to track this time.

the Student Awards Committee. Stotz presented a paper entitled "Which birds are at risk -- ecological and distributional correlates of extinction threat in Neotropical birds". Harshman presented two posters-- "Is cytochrome *b* a good gene for higher avian systematics? Does this question even make sense?" and "Cytochrome *b* phylogeny of fowl (Galliformes and Anseriformes)." The recently departed **Scott Lanyon** gave his last paper with a Field Museum address on the phylogeny of blackbirds.

THAI OFFICIALS VISIT GEOLOGY AND ZOOLOGY DEPARTMENTS

On August 23, **Matthew Nitecki, John Flynn, Meenakshi Wadhwa** (all Geology) and **John Sklapcinsky** (Zoology, Invertebrates) hosted a delegation of scientists from Thailand's Department of Mineral Resources and Geological Museum. Their particular interests were in the ecology and evolution of zebra mussels of Lake Michigan, fossil mollusks, management of geological collections and preparation of exhibit material. They were given a tour of *DNA to Dinosaurs* and then the Geology Department, where they were supplied with reference materials, names and places. John Slapcinsky showed them Zoology's collection of zebra mollusks and discussed with them the mollusk's distribution and the ecological consequences of their invasion of the Great Lakes. The group was joined for lunch by **Peter R. Crane** (Vice President, Academic Affairs). Their visit was arranged by the Royal Thai Embassy in Washington, D.C.

GEOLOGISTS RETURN FROM FIELD WORK

Gregory Buckley (Geology) recently spent six weeks in northwestern Madagascar collecting Late Cretaceous fossils. Although field conditions were rather harsh, the expedition was extremely successful. Among the fossils collected were the remains of snakes, frogs, turtles, crocodilians, fish, lizards, and dinosaurs. Some of the most exciting finds include a nearly complete skeleton of a large primitive crocodilian, and a nearly complete skeleton of a juvenile sauropod. Both specimens will be arriving at The Field Museum within the next several months for preparation work. Although identification is still preliminary, the most exciting discovery may turn out to be the partial skeleton of a bird. Most of the specimen is encased in rock, but if it is a bird, it will be the first known Cretaceous bird from Africa In addition to Buckley, the expedition crew included researchers from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Duke University, and the University of Antananarivo, Madagascar. The expedition was funded by the National Science Foundation.

Lance Grande (Geology) is back from another round of travels. He spent two weeks in June doing field work in Wyoming in the Green River Formation, with the help of **Bill Simpson** (Geology) and **Terry Grande** (Research Associate, Geology). Through Terry, Loyola University (where she is Assistant Professor of Biology) co-sponsored this year's field season.

Shortly after Lance got back, he left for a week at the National University of Mexico (UNAM) in Mexico City to present invited talks to the Instituto de Geologia and the Instituto de Biologia on systematics biogeography, and the comparative anatomy of primitive ray-finned fishes. He was

also invited to contribute a talk to the Colin Patterson Symposium on the Interrelationships of Fishes, at the A.S.I.H. meeting in Edmonton in June. Because of scheduling conflicts, he could not personally attend the Edmonton meeting, so the talk was read by his colleague, Willy Bemis. The symposium talks will be published by Academic Press next year in a volume entitled "Interrelationships of Fishes, Revisited".

Congratulations! September Anniversaries

Paul Adams	Education	5 years
Robert Battaglia	Engineering	35 years
Frantz Eliacin	Mailroom	15 years
Robert French	Security Services	10 years
Margaret Ketcham	Development	5 years
Harvey Matthew	Exhibits	20 years
Janet Voight	Zoology	5 years

NEW STAFF AND VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION PROGRAM

Our next new staff and volunteer orientation session will be held in Lecture Hall II on Friday, September 15 from, 9:00 a.m. until 12:00 p.m. Recently hired staff and volunteers are cordially invited to attend. The program includes refreshments, a presentation featuring guest speakers and a "behind-the-scenes" tour of the Museum! Check with your supervisor if you plan to attend, and call **Heidi** in Personnel (x531) to reserve your space today!

We extend our deepest sympathies to **Pam Buczkowske,** Security Services, on the death of her father, Robert Buczkowske, on September 5 in Florida.

The *Natural News* is edited by **Carolyn Klyce** in the President's Office. The deadline for all submissions is Tuesday at noon. Printed on recycled paper.

Thanks!

Kim Holmes, of the Museum Stores, would like to thank everyone for their expressions of love in the passing of her father, Emanuel Ambrose.

MUSEUM SHOCKER: *DILLENBURG* NOT PERFECT!

The Chicago museum community was thrown into a panic last Friday by revelations that Field Museum Fix-Up Maven **Gene Dillenburg** had actually made a mistake. In last week's issue of the *Natural News,* three staff members were omitted from the list of people who had worked on recent Fix-Up projects: **Fred Anderson,** who did the label copy for the new display on Contemporary Navaho weaving; **Michael Hay,** who did photo research for the Tobacco exhibit; and **Amy E. McManus,** who performed the same duties for the Navaho case.